

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Museum Technician

Class Code: 30725

A. Purpose:

Catalogs and prepares museum artifacts for preservation and assists with the production and installation of museum exhibits to provide educational services to the public and promote increased use of museum facilities.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Museum Technicians catalog and inventory acquisitions, conduct preservation activities, perform conservation techniques, and install museum exhibits.

Museum Guides provide information to visitors, maintain security of exhibits, conduct tours, collect admission fees, and keep records of visitor numbers.

Museum Curators design and oversee the production of exhibits, research and prepare collections, determine significance of collections and whether they should be added to the state's collection, and develop educational programs on South Dakota's heritage.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Acquires, prepares, treats, and repairs museum acquisitions to restore and preserve artifacts.
 - a. Preserves artifacts by using solvents in wet cleaning, vacuuming, and repairing specimens and other minor conservation techniques.
 - b. Logs in new acquisitions on computer and assigns identification markings and writes detailed physical descriptions of acquisitions.
 - c. Inventories the museum collection.
2. Selects and prepares artifacts, and constructs protective covers and supports to assist in the production and installation of museum exhibits and long-term preservation.
 - a. Sets up backdrops, makes labels for artifacts, and paints and does minor carpentry work for exhibits.
 - b. Maintains cleanliness and order of museum collections, exhibits, and storage areas in the museum.
 - c. Schedules, ships, and maintains traveling exhibits.
3. Conducts museum tours and answers questions to provide information and maintain a positive public image of the museum.
 - a. Assists researchers and the general public by responding to requests related to museum collections and/or preservation methods.
 - b. Conducts educational tours of the museum, monitors visitors, and maintains security of exhibit areas.
4. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to the Museum Director, and may receive work direction from a Museum Curator. May train and prepare work schedules for Museum Guides or student workers.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include applying the most appropriate preservation and storage methods to museum collections and using the best methods and materials for minor repair and conservation of artifacts. This is difficult because the historical value of the objects acquired may be lost if the wrong preservation methods are used and permanent damage to the artifact is done. The incumbent is further challenged to write clear and concise catalogue descriptions of acquired objects, which requires considerable knowledge of the materials' culture.

Problems include dealing with limited display space for exhibits, adapting improved preservation methods, and determining the most interesting information to present to different tour groups.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include determining the appropriate process to use in preserving and storing collections and artifacts within established preservation treatment techniques, specific items to be displayed in exhibits, the content of catalogue cards, and information to be presented to tour groups.

Decisions referred include objects needing preservation or restoration; approval on acceptance of new acquisitions; policies regarding tour information, collection storage, and conservation; and using new museum conservation methods.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with museum visitors to answer questions and give directions, and student workers or Museum Guides to give directions on care of specimens. Weekly contact with guided tour groups and with researchers interested in specific collections to provide technical assistance.

H. Working Conditions:

Works in a museum and laboratory which involves handling toxic chemical solvents used in conservation, lifting large, heavy storage containers, and building exhibit displays.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- natural history specimens;
- material culture artifacts;
- preservation materials and methods;
- desktop publishing computer software.

Ability to:

- work with delicate artifacts;
- keep accurate records;

- construct and assemble exhibits;
- communicate information clearly and concisely.